The Postmodern Life of My Aunt

Extract One

**Issue: Impact on Change on Society**

* materialism – Mrs. Shui an example of materialism with different wigs and clothes that match; Aunty is very critical of this； 什么颜色的衣服就要配什么颜色的头发
* loss of lifestyle and values - Lao Ye is remonstrating Mrs Shui for her lack of tradition values and claiming she is a traditional model of society; 堂堂正正大学生；先进工作者； 一生清高；Lao Ye treats her nephew like a parent would in a traditional manner, not adopting a friend – friend relationship 难道我怠慢你了是吧？
* conformity versus isolation - Lao Ye isolates herself by claiming to be better educated and more sophisticated than the rest of the building; 这栋楼里头上上下下都是瘪三 (tramp)。Mrs Shui thinks that Lao Ye should be treating others to a meal because she has found a new job, thereby expecting her to conform with this traditional practice

**Issue: Relationships**

* world of the old and the young – Kuankuan is in his own technological world, not communicating with his aunty; he expects the comforts of air conditioning; Kuankuan wants to enjoy the here and now at any cost, wasting electricity on air conditioning and lights; 我小的时候这个风扇都没见过啊！
* responsibility towards others – Lao Ye takes Kuankuan in and feels some responsibility towards him
* attachment to people and places – Lao Ye doesn’t consider herself to be attached to the people she is associated with in the building; However, she is attached to Kuankuan who is part of her family

**Issue: Search for Personal Identity**

* pursuit of personal ideals – Mrs Shui’s ideals are to live a superficial glamorous life and she is pursuing this; Lao Ye is pursuing her own dreams and has found a job in Shanghai; Lao Ye doesn’t wish to be associated with the other people in the building referring to herself with 你姨妈不同，你姨妈外露，一生清高。
* coping with adversity – none
* reality versus illusion – Lao Ye seems to be a little deluded by her own sense of superiority and not fully in touch with reality; her unit isn’t that luxurious; can’t live with the better educated; Mrs Shui is quite deluded in thinking she is particularly glamorous and spends her money on wigs and clothing; she also has an obsessive relationship with her cat that she dresses and keeps as a constant companion

Extract Two

**Issue: Impact of Change on Society**

* loss of traditional lifestyles and values – Lao Ye is adopting a more contemporary view of her role in society and wanting to protect the environment and argues everyone has a responsibility to contribute towards environmental protection; she knows how to use the law to argue her point
* materialism – none
* conformity versus isolation – Lao Ye considers herself to be superior than others and therefore interferes with the shopkeeper telling her what to do; 我是什么人啊？公民啊！

**Issue: Relationships**

* world of the old and the young
* responsibility towards others – Lao Ye has a greater sense of citizenship and social responsibility whereas the shopkeeper is very selfish
* attachment to people and places

**Issue: Search for Personal Identity**

* pursuit of personal ideals
* coping with adversity – Lao Ye draws on the traditional practice of reaching out to those with authority to deal with the shopkeeper
* reality versus illusion – Lao Ye is under the illusion that she is superior to others and wishes to enforce her feelings of authority and superiority by arguing with the shopkeeper
* shopkeeper uses her rural identity to claim ignorance

Extract Three

**Issue: Impact of Change on Society**

* Lao Ye’s investment in grave sites is non-traditional; there is no trust even within close relationships 我再坏也坏不到这份上。; Lao Ye is using traditional judgement to deal with modern society and make investments

**Issue: Relationships**

* responsibility towards others: Mr Pan sits by Lao Ye’s bedside, demonstrating some feeling of responsibility, after she has received the terrible shock of losing all of her savings; Lao Ye can only believe that he has swindled her and therefore demonstrates a total lack of trust in her relationship with Mr Pan; Mr Pan tries to maintain the relationship and says 我也买了呀，老叶！but Lao Ye doesn’t want to have anything to do with him;

**Issue: Search for Personal Identity**

* pursuit of personal ideals – Lao Ye collapses totally when her personal ideal is crushed and destroyed
* coping with adversity – she is totally incapable of dealing with the problem; she wants to ignore Mr Pan; she is totally crushed and destroyed
* reality versus illusion – the reality of living in Shanghai finally dawns upon her; her dream of living a sophisticated life in Shanghai has been destroyed; 我希望你不是真的在骗我，老潘。